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ABSTRACT

The major responsibility of this workshop on nonformal education is to establish some prototypes of community training activities which will coordinate with the agricultural and health components of Ethiopia's Fourth Five Year Plan for rural development and which can later be reproduced in the countryside. Linking education to overall development objectives requires new thinking to incorporate: (1) a curriculum that grows from the community; (2) "classrooms" at any point where learning takes place' (3) schools that are integrated into the community; (4) highly flexible educators who can respond to the immediate needs of the community; (5) respect for and inclusion of the "noneducated"; (6) heavy emphasis on skill implementation and follow-up procedures. This workshop will be working with the concept of the "community practicum" which embodies the following: (1) a practical and community orientation emphasizing application via total community availability; (2) participation by both trainees and trainers; (3) response to expressed community needs; (4) utilization of existing skills and resources in an effort to promote self-employment and increased levels of income; (5) practical skills related to local productivity. Questions to be considered at this workshop should focus on how the community practicum concept can be implemented and how to best guard against bureaucratic suffocation. (JC)

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WORKSHOP ON NON-FORMAL EDUCATION
(Yared Music School, Addis Ababa)

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"TOWARDS NEW VENTURES IN EDUCATION"

Address by H.E. Ato Million Neqniq,
Minister of State for Education and Fine Arts.

Monday, 18 February 1974.

RC009017

TOWARDS NEW VENTURES IN EDUCATION

Background

This Workshop, which has just been opened by H.E. the Minister, is charged with some heavy responsibilities. The final objective is fairly easily definable. We wish to establish the prototypes of community training activities which can later be reproduced elsewhere in the countryside. These centres will meet the increasing demands for new knowledge and skills which permit people to participate in the betterment of their own conditions of life.

Before we can do this, however, we must relate our proposals to the general framework of development which we expect during the coming Five Year Plan period; and to the proposals for educational development within the plan. These include a number of proposals for a much increased emphasis upon non-formal education of which our community training centres form a part.

During the past two years, as part of an extensive re-thinking about development strategy, we have had sector reviews in education, agriculture and health. These are the three sectors which concern virtually everybody in Ethiopia. There is a universal claim to a place in schools; 80% of our population derives its living directly from farming and all of us are naturally concerned as consumers of agricultural products; access to health services is fundamental to human well-being.

Ideas developed during these various reviews are being

embodied in the Fourth Five Year Development Plan of the nation, which begins in August of this year. The Fourth Plan will focus very closely upon rural development for this is where the majority of the population are to be found. The major components of rural development in the Fourth Plan will include Awraja Self-Administration (providing a framework for popular participation and development coordination); minimum package activities of the Ministry of Agriculture, a Rural Public Works programme, emphasis upon prevention and community sanitation in the health services and our new strategy for education. A study of the documentation relevant to these programme components will be an important part of this workshop.

It is anticipated that these efforts, coordinated at Awraja level, will lead to action on a broad front which will increase rural income, widen the spectrum of rural employment, provide basic infrastructure for further development and generally raise the tempo and quality of life in rural areas. To this programme, education in a variety of forms and from a variety of delivery systems, will contribute knowledge and skills and promote understanding.

Co-ordination will be particularly important in relation to the whole range of non-formal and sometimes, informal, education. The development of human resources in rural areas must be viewed as a national programme in which many agencies are, and will continue to be, involved. It cannot be viewed as a programme for which the Ministry of Education will be entirely responsible. Thus linkages between the various activities, planning and programming of the

efforts of the various development agencies and the avoidance of overlap and duplication of effort become very important. At the Awraja level a framework for action, accentuating horizontal relationships rather than vertical organizations has already been suggested. At village level, as we shall discuss shortly, one possible solution is the Community Practicum, the concept which is now our major concern in this Workshop.

In the past, the education system has been accustomed to exaggerate its role as the promotor, the innovator and even the starting point of change. While not denying that these influences are possible, it now seems clear that we must place a rather different emphasis upon our responsibilities. We will retain and develop the task which we share with parents, family and community of guiding the general growth and development of young people. But, in addition, the facilities we create must serve the specific and practical needs of the communities in which they are located. They must respond to rather than require from the community. In this role, we shall be concerned with knowledge and skills relevant to the practical purposes of economic and social development. Of particular significance are knowledge of the immediate environment, its resources and their exploitation and conservation, the practical skills which will enable people to make effective use of local resources and the communication skills which will permit this to take place.

Here lies the major justification of our non-formal training programme. In responding to local needs, in carrying out training in

ways which will not separate people from their daily life, and in emphasizing skills and knowledge which will make people more self-sufficient, we hope to attain a number of objectives.

We hope, first, to contribute to the receptivity of people to the processes of change and development. Change means new techniques, new patterns of work, and new forms of organization. For these to become a lasting part of the community, people must participate positively and not merely passively. They must, as soon as possible, contribute to the very evolution of new ideas within their own communities. Community Workshops (using the term in the sense of our present workshop) can contribute to this.

Secondly, we would hope to contribute to the widening and deepening of the range of economic activities in the countryside. We would hope to attack the dual problems of under-employment and unemployment - the under-employment of agriculturalists during the slack seasons of the year - the low productivity of the large majority of farm workers - and, the view of the young that no satisfactory employment is to be found in the countryside. If we are successful we will contribute to using rural incomes and to a slowing down of the rate of migration from the countryside to the towns where the possibilities of employment creation are generally much lower.

Finally, we would hope to contribute to changing attitudes towards work and income. The advent of the modern education system, which was paralleled by some expansion in government employment and in the growth of private enterprise created a new feature of life

in Ethiopia. It became possible, through education, to obtain the qualifications sought by employers. The security of wages and salaries paid by others was much sought after, so that we are now in the danger of thinking that this type of economic relationship is the only one which is worth-while. We must now redress the balance and move towards much larger elements of self-employment and cooperative activity. Both these depend upon people being aware of possibilities, having confidence in their own abilities, and being equipped with the knowledge and skill to carry them out.

If one or all these possibilities exist in the environment of our non-formal programmes, then there is a thorough justification for initiating them. If doubts are present, if we are not sure of the uses to which new skills will be put, then we must also have doubts about the validity of devoting resources to skill training. The links between education and training on the one hand and the overall development processes in the various localities must, therefore, be very strong. A major purpose of this workshop is to define how these linkages can best be cultivated.

The Need for New Thinking

As soon as we begin to approach the problem of designing the educational inputs which will contribute to overall development, we find ourselves restricted by the traditions of educational practice. For generations we have been using terms like curriculum, classroom, school, teacher, student, textbook and examination. All these

conjure up preconceived definitions and patterns of activity. It is clear that a great deal of what we have been assuming under each of these headings is no longer valid. The curriculum must grow from the base and must not be imposed from the centre. A classroom must be conceived as any space or point at which learning can take place. The school itself must grow into the community and not shelter behind its compound fence offering facilities for the few. There are many in the community from whom we can learn and we must combine their efforts with those of the professional teacher. The student must cease to be a distinct group in society; the whole community will learn. Teaching materials will escape from the rigid confines of the traditional textbook and we will develop new and more effective ways of evaluating the performance of all the various participants in the education process.

In particular, 'professional educators' must be prepared to revalue their role. The historical trend has been the growth of professionalism in education, a process which has at the same time taken us far from the communities we are supposed to serve. The valuable informal education, once given by father to son, has been eliminated by the classroom and the school. Professionals must now show themselves sufficiently flexible to encourage the re-entry of informal and non-formal education into the total process of learning.

Finally, we must have a great deal of re-thinking about the customers, about those who will participate in the new programmes. It has been customary to classify people as 'schooled' and 'unschooled'

as 'literate' and 'illierate' and to equate these expressions with qualities like 'able' and 'unable' and even 'wise' and 'stupid'. It is clear that these attitudes are not productive and that the non-educated person has a great deal of wisdom to contribute both in the organization of his own affairs and to the local decisions which will have to be made on the new patterns of education.

Part of the re-thinking about the participants involves a continuous concern, during the training period, of the use to which they will put the skills and knowledge delivered to them. If education is to help at all in employment generation in the countryside, and there are admittedly limits to this role, it must help the trainee consider the ways in which his hopes for a new vocation or a new facet to his present vocation can materialize. There may be ways in which the 'follow-up' activities of village centres should be developed. The experiences generated by this workshop should help lead to some conclusions on these issues.

What is a Community Practicum?

We invented the term 'Community Practicum' during the Education Sector Review. It was a brave attempt to express in one general term the sense of a whole range of activities which we expect to see developing in the countryside. At the time of its creation the meaning of this term was clearly understood by those who participated in the Review. We must now justify it and explain it to those who did not take part in the Review.

The Task Force on Curriculum, which coined the term, expressed the concept as follows:

> "When an out-of-school situation (extension meeting, village craft meeting - even Edir) can make use of certain of the school facilities and materials and vice versa, a Community Practicum is born. A Community Practicum is, therefore, an inter-related in-school and out-of-school practical educational experience of a semi-institutionalised nature".

This is saying essentially that there should be non-formal activity and the non-formal and the formal must be linked together. I will make bold to elaborate on this and suggest for discussion that a Community Practicum embodies the following ideas:

(a) At the most basic level, it is both practical and community based. This demands application rather than theory and implies availability to the total community in satisfaction of community needs.

(b) The 'community' side of the equation includes participation by both trainees and trainers. People who require additional skills or practical knowledge will often be able to obtain these from others in the community provided that an organizational framework is available for this to take place. In this connection, the term 'community' must include all those who are permanently or temporarily resident in the locality. It will include, for example, all local

agents of development ministries and agencies.

(c) I see several aspects to the practical side of the equation. The practical exercise must result directly or indirectly in rising levels of income and thus to rising standards of life. For this to be, the practical experience which is provided must be in direct response to the expressed needs of the local community. This response may sometimes be guided but the demand must never be imposed from above as the result of a survey of theoretical needs.

The practical skills which emerge must be related to productive activity in the locality, but it is not enough to say that if carpenters or wheelwrights are required, then these must be produced. For the skills to be fully relevant, we must be careful about the way they are produced and the kind of technology which is used. These factors are both vital to the success of the operation. The first implies that skills are acquired in circumstances similar to those in which they will be utilized. An experience in a western style workshop equipped with power machinery and electric light will not produce a village level artisan who will be using hand tools in an open, lean-to workshop. The level of technology is obviously related to this and determines the whole approach. The technology employed/should make possible a growing volume of labour-intensive, self-employed productive activity servicing a growing variety of rural needs. When the appropriate level of technology is in doubt, there

are three questions which should be asked: Can this skill or technique be used in the local area without constant reference to external technicians? Can this skill or technique be transmitted within the community without further external assistance? Can the products of this skill or technique be maintained within the resources normally found in the community?

Finally, it must be said that the available practical skills must not be limited to what are normally considered as artisan, mechanical or technical skills. They must, for example, include communication skills, computational skills and organizational skills, all of which are essential to any aspect of rural development.

We are now in a position to attempt a more complete and rounded definition of a Community Practicum. It is a low-cost training facility, the objective of which is to provide the means of upgrading old skills and introducing new skills into the locality. It will normally have working spaces for practical activities, but it may also use the facilities of other delivery systems and it must whenever possible draw upon local talent to reinforce the instructional programme. It will make its programme available to a variety of age groups and to both sexes and its curriculum will spring from the practical needs of the community. In the design of the curriculum and in the methodology employed, the needs of self-employment for the individual and self-reliance for the community will be borne strongly in mind. The practicum will serve the cause of life-long education.

Ten Questions for the Workshop

The broad criteria which have been established and the initial image of community education at village level which has emerged lead us to a number of questions most of which begin with How. I see the central task of this workshop as a search for the answers to some of these questions, not final answers but initial proposals which will help to set the whole process in motion. Here are some of the questions:

(1) The implementation of the practicum requires the exercise of initiative and imagination at all levels within a delivery system in which flexibility is a major characteristic. How are staff to be encouraged in these qualities?

(2) In many ways the success of this programme will depend upon the use of and respect for local initiative. How can this be ensured from the very beginning?

(3) It has been demonstrated here and elsewhere that low-cost operations, functioning as an organic part of the community, are those most likely to be effective. How can the danger of over-capitalization be avoided? How can we ensure that these centres (after initial experimentation) are replicable within community resources?

(4) The major responsibility of the administrative machine will be to service the developing pattern of centres within the awrajas and to meet needs in terms of materials, advice, technical assistance from specialists, teaching materials

and perhaps capital for further development. What kind of administrative arrangements will be required to avoid suffocation by bureaucracy?

(5) Does the servicing of local training centres imply the need for a 'master' centre, responsible for research and development work and for the dissemination of ideas and teaching materials? Or is the concept of a 'master' centre opposed to the idea that growth and development can only proceed from within the locality?

(6) The essence of much of the work which practicums will carry out is the transmission of practical experience from established artisans to trainees in various fields. Do artisans or community resource people need an introduction to the profession of instructor - if so, how is this best carried out?

(7) It is likely that the expanding pattern of practicums will be paralelled by expanding patterns of activities within the centres. What kinds of activities would be most fruitful initially and in what way can these initial activities be expected to expand into a fuller programme?

(8) The work of practicums must be closely integrated with the efforts of other development agents in the local area. What guidelines can be developed to ensure that this takes place? What linkages can be established between non-formal education and other development activity and what is the

best way to establish these links?

(9) It is essential to establish an effective process by which ideas can be fed down to the centres. It is equally, if not more important, that a feedback of ideas and experience from the centres should be established. How?

(10) What is the most effective role which external assistance can play in the development of non-formal education and community practicums in particular?

The Conditions for Success

Having described the problem and posed so many questions for the Workshop, it may seem presumptuous to begin to answer the questions! This is not, however, my intention. I am merely conscious that there is a great deal of existing experience - some of which may be of value. I say, 'may be' because we must always be careful about drawing on experience elsewhere. Even within our own country, environmental conditions and the circumstances for an active process of development are extremely varied. It is a fair assumption that we must be careful, not only about the way in which we incorporate existing experience, but also in our definition of the conditions for replication of these pilot experiments.

However, we have all been observing what is going on, particularly elsewhere in Africa, and we have all done our reading, so it may be useful to set up a series of propositions which seem to indicate the best general conditions for success. These may serve

as focal points for discussion during the workshop. They may be accepted, denied or modified. They are certainly not offered to you as chapters in a new educational gospel.

1. It seems to be proved conclusively that no project or group of projects will succeed if they are attempted in isolation and in the absence of other government policies designed to accelerate the absorption of people into profitable activities. In other words, human resource development is futile without human resource utilization. In general terms this means that there must be some expansion of the effective demand for goods and services in the locality or region which will produce a demand for the skills and new technology being developed.

The initiation of the rural development programmes which I have described earlier provides a full justification for our new educational efforts but care must be taken that the two aspects of development (material resources and human resources) do not get out of step.

2. The vast majority of the existing operations in Afric. are small in size, rarely having more than 100 students. Small-size institutions seem to be more successful in placing trainees on completion of the course. This is logical since they serve a smaller area and can achieve closer integration with local activities as well as achieving a higher degree of local support. This is particularly important if a high degree of self-employment is to result. On the financial side they have an advantage. Since they

serve a smaller area boarding facilities are not necessary. Psychologically they are better because participants are not uprooted from their environment. Organizationally they are preferable since they do not support a vast bureaucracy.

3. The more successful seem to have procedures of application, followed by interview with an attempt to ensure that the applicant has something specific in mind for which he requires training.

4. In general it can be said that the longer the course the more like a formal school the operation becomes and the more it develops the undesirable attributes of formal schooling which the institutes were originally set up to avoid. The conclusion must be that courses should be cut to the minimum content and the minimum length with the possibility open for participants to return later if further training is required. In this way, our practicums will make a valuable contribution towards the important concept of life-long education.

5. In general it can also be concluded that small institutes serving limited areas are able to identify specific objectives and courses can then evolve to meet these specific objectives. It also appears to be necessary for institutes to be flexible. Specific areas of demand can easily be saturated and the course should then be oriented in another direction. This again is more easily achieved if the institute is small.

6. In the following paragraphs I would like to return to this question of employment which I have stressed before. Obviously the

least successful of the experiments in Africa have been those in which little attempt has been made to anticipate the end use of the product. The first step is to explore local demand and then devise a curriculum to meet this demand. Asking local people must form a large element in this exploration. Thus, curricula cannot be anticipated or designed on a national scale.

One interesting and general experience is that few of the existing operations in Africa have been successful in <u>generating</u> employment. As suggested above, for this to take place a more general framework of support is required. In other words, the training institute has been proved to have a great potential but this potential, in the form of subsequent wage employment and/or self-employment, is only realizable when there is some movement in the local economy. Once such movement exists there is a basis for cooperation between the staff of the institute and the various elements within the economy.

From the curriculum point of view it would seem that if a measure of self-employment is to be generated training must pay some attention to the development of marketing skills and initative.

It may also be useful, if the generation of self-employment is to be treated seriously, to think in terms of applying at least part of whatever income can be generated in the Centre to the provision of simple tool kits for students successfully completing the course who are going to work independently. If the Centres are catering for a limited local area and contact is maintained with trainees it may be possible to recover part if not all of the cost of these tool kits

subsequently.

Finance

Having described in broad terms what we would like to and what we think about the best way to do it, my next comment leads us to that inescapable and final question - Where is the money coming from?

There seems to have been a general tendency elsewhere to avoid altogether the payment of fees and certainly to avoid charging the full cost. There are examples of high fees resulting in high drop-out rates. Should a cash contribution be made by the participant, or should he be asked to contribute to local development in other ways?

Elsewhere there has been a general tendency to keep capital costs low so that recurrent costs represent a high proportion of total costs. Most of the more successful projects have used student labour and local materials for the construction of buildings. Buildings have been unsophisticated in nature. The implication in terms of staff is that somebody capable of erecting simple but improved buildings must be employed. Equipment is very often donated from external sources. If these principles are valid, how can they be implemented in Ethiopia so that we can achieve a rapid spread of centres at points where they are required?

Since many of these projects have not been long in existence there are few examples in which an operation cost analysis

is available. For those examples where figures are available there is a wide variation. The question is open for the Workshop. What represents a reasonable figure for running costs in the context of the need for the universal participation in such training centres?

It is possible that the centres may be able to support their own efforts. However, it would appear that in no case(except perhaps with the Brigade System in Botswana which results in a relatively long course, so that the labour in training can be used productively to support the operation), have these operations managed to become self-supporting through their own production. However, the sale of products and/or the organization of contracts to be carried out by the institute can produce significant income. On most of the rural Training Centres in Tanzania farm activities cover everything except staff wages. What has been the experience so far in Ethiopia and how far can we expect practical training centres to be financially self-supporting?

When the pilot experiments have been made and the conclusions have been drawn the costs can be calculated more accurately. When all forms of national support have been added up, it is possible that there will be a gap between resources and needs to which external assistance can usefully be applied.

It must be borne in mind, however, that major principles behind this operation are that it should lead to a higher degree of self-sufficiency through higher productivity and more self-employment in non-farm occupations. The whole process must, therefore, be

related to rural realities.

With these principles in mind, I would like to ask the Workshop to include in its agenda the question of recommending useful guidelines for the possible application of external aid to non-formal education in rural areas.

Some Conclusions

From this Workshop we are looking for some general guidelines in addition to the answers to specific questions.

We are looking for the most effective ways in which our non-formal education system can contribute, through village level practicums, to a wider range of available techniques and a higher level of technology among the general public.

We are looking for an approach which will make it possible for people to achieve a higher standard of life in their own localities and to achieve this through self-employment.

We are hoping that these initial efforts will lead to a self-generating process in which non-formal training will lead to locally organized apprenticeship and where the activities of extension agents will be replaced by cooperative management.

In considering the possibility of achieving these objectives, we can be absolutely sure of one principle. Our strategy must be firmly based on the cultural and historical traditions of our society. Only from this position can we change what has to be changed.

May I wish you success in what I hope will be a very practical Workshop appropriate to the object of its investigations.

MILLION NEQNIQ